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Letters

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LETTER OF THE DAY: PROTECTING ELDERLY

Radical reform of the regulation and inspection regime needed to safeguard care home residents

AT Action on Elder Abuse Northern Ireland, we were appalled to learn that the safety of Northern Ireland care home residents “cannot be guaranteed”, following the Commissioner for Older People’s assessment on the responses he has received in the aftermath of the shocking instances of abuse and neglect that took place at Dunmurry Manor.

While we understand that it takes time to bring about changes to policy and practice, it is simply unacceptable that, 18 months after Eddie Lynch published his report into the dreadful conditions at the disgraced care home,

we seem to be no closer to achieving an acceptable standard of care for our older people.

We share Mr Lynch’s frustration at the lack of progress in addressing systematic flaws that continue to put some of the most vulnerable people in society at risk and welcome swift action from the new Health Minister, Robin Swann, in bringing forward legislative change, now that devolution has been restored.

It is, no doubt, positive that the majority of Mr Lynch’s 59 recommendations for improving the treatment of care home residents have been accept-

ed, but radical reform of the regulation and inspection regime is also needed in order to adequately safeguard care home residents.

We are aware of the level of anxiety among family members with loved ones living in care facilities and we encourage anyone with any level of concern to talk to our helpline in confidence on 080 8808 8141.

VERONICA GRAY

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